Brussels, 11 November 2026

Digital Fairness Act:
European press publishers concerned about (unfair) consequences for journalism funding

EMMA and ENPA express concern about the consequences of the proposed Digital Fairness Act for subscriptions and the financing of independent press and media.

European press publishers support the objective of protecting consumers against misleading practices. However, the proposed horizontal rules on subscriptions target all sectors in the same manner and as such, disregard the specificities of the press sector. For press publishers, the central concern is the proposal's broad, horizontal scope. Rules intended to tackle deliberately opaque subscription schemes by new digital players would also apply to press publishers, which depend on trusted relationships with their readers.

The proposal would add new and burdensome information requirements to an already complex consumer protection framework, while banning successful subscription practices.

EMMA and ENPA are particularly concerned about restrictions on free trials and the transition to paid subscriptions, as well as additional reminders and requirements to renew consent where readers have already accepted clear subscription terms. Such obligations would interrupt access that readers wish to maintain and impose additional costs on publishers.

As a result, digital press subscriptions become harder to offer, harder to maintain, more burdensome to manage and less economically viable.

Moreover, the proposed advertising and personalization restrictions carry the risk of weakening the funding of the independent press. Rules addressing manipulative and addictive design could inadvertently capture legitimate features that enable readers to discover and engage with editorial content. Both sets of provisions therefore require a clearly defined scope to prevent unintended adverse effects on the press.

On average, more than half of newspaper and magazine distribution happens online. As print circulation declines, publishers depend on growing revenues from digital services to sustain their editorial operations. Additional regulatory burdens would undermine this transition and weaken the free press.

François le Hodey, President of ENPA, said:

"Subscriptions provide a reliable and predictable source of income, enabling publishers to invest in journalism while giving readers continuous access to their chosen publications. Any further regulation must take account of the consequences for this essential source of funding."

Mike Koedinger, President of EMMA, said:

"Additional obligations should be targeted in scope and bring a clear benefit to consumers and take account of the role of subscriptions in supporting access to a diverse range of press publications."

EMMA and ENPA stand ready to engage with EU legislators to ensure that the Digital Fairness Act protects consumers while preserving the subscription models that sustain European press and journalism.